

SYPHILIS

WHAT IS IT?

- Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- You can get it from having vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who has syphilis.
- You can have syphilis and not even know it. The only way to tell is by having a special test.
- It can be cured if you take the right medicine.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Look for a sore on or around your penis, vagina, mouth or anus.

- The sore may not hurt. Many people don't see or feel it at all
- You may see it one week to three months after having sex with someone who has syphilis.
- The sore goes away by itself in a few weeks but you are not cured. You can still pass syphilis on to someone.
- A few months later, you may get a
 - ◆ rash, ◆ fever, ◆ sore throat, or ◆ hair loss.
- These problems will also go away and you can still pass syphilis on to someone. Syphilis stays in your body until you take the right medicine.

IF NOT TREATED

- Syphilis is a serious disease.
- It can cause heart and brain damage, blindness and even death.
- If you are pregnant, your baby can be born dead or with birth defects.

HOW TO FIND OUT IF YOU HAVE IT

If you think you have syphilis or may have been exposed:

- Go to a clinic or a doctor right away to get a blood test for syphilis.
- Free and confidential syphilis testing and treatment are available through the Department of Health.
- Your sex partners may also have syphilis and need to get checked and take the right medicine.
- Don't have sex until both you and your partners are cured.

PROTECT YOURSELF!

- Whether you have sex with men, women, or both-- using a latex condom (rubber) is the best way to protect yourself from STDs.
- If you have unprotected sex with more than one partner or if your only partner might be having sex with other people, get an STD exam every 6 months.
- Do not have sex if your partners have signs of STD.